

SUMMER 2025

The magazine of Jewish Blind & Disabled

THE KEY

In this issue:

Fairacres redevelopment

Jo & Chris's Story

News from around JBD



From our CEO



We are fast approaching Rosh Hashanah, our Jewish New Year – a natural time for reflection and renewal.

Just as Rosh Hashanah marks the beginning of a new year, the near completion of Ephraim Court, our eighth development of accessible housing, marks a new chapter for Jewish Blind & Disabled.

Ephraim Court, located in the heart of a growing Mill Hill East Jewish community, represents more than just a new building; it symbolises new beginnings for those who will call it home.

Many of the first tenants at Ephraim Court will be current tenants from our oldest building Fairacres, in East Finchley. As you will read on page 10, this building is no longer fit for purpose, and we have plans to transform and extend Fairacres into a new state-of-the-art building fit for the future.

To embark on these works we have had to take the difficult decision to move all the tenants, and we have a unique opportunity to do this with the completion of Ephraim Court. We are working closely with each tenant to ensure we support them with this move. We know this will be difficult for some; however, we know it is the right thing to do to ensure they have a home that is suitable to meet their current and future needs. Alongside the Fairacres tenants we will have a handful of new two-bedroom apartments available for some of the many people on our waiting list.

For them, the opportunity to move into a new accessible home with 24/7 support within a supportive Jewish environment couldn't come soon enough.

Before we move tenants in there will be a small window of opportunity to open the doors of Ephraim Court to the many generous people from across the community who have made this development possible. We are so grateful to them for their support; each one of them has made new beginnings possible, assisting us in transforming the lives of Jewish people living with physical disabilities or sight loss.

**WE ARE COMMITTED TO
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES
FOR NEW BEGINNINGS
IN ALL ASPECTS OF
OUR WORK**

But new beginnings at Jewish Blind & Disabled are not limited to our housing developments. Every day, we witness new beginnings through our Independent Living Advisory Service (ILA). For individuals struggling to access advice, aids, and adaptations to support their independent living, a call to the ILA can be life changing. Our occupational therapist-led service offers guidance on assistive technology and adaptations, helping people maintain their independence without the need to move into one of our developments. Whether it's a small adaptation like a grab rail or a larger modification like a stairlift, our team is dedicated to finding solutions that enhance quality of life.

Thanks to funding from our principal supporter, Wohl Legacy, alongside generous individuals from across the community we have been able to offer, grow and develop this service to ensure everyone who is eligible for the service can access it and receive timely support.

Our Sight Loss Support Groups also embody the spirit of new beginnings. These groups provide a safe and supportive space for individuals living with vision impairments to connect, share experiences, and receive valuable information and support. The success of these groups highlights the importance of community and the positive impact that peer support can have on individuals' lives. You can read more about these groups on page 12.

We are committed to creating opportunities for new beginnings in all aspects of our work. Whether it's through our housing developments, advisory services, or support groups, we strive to empower individuals to live their best lives with independence, dignity, and choice.

We are only able to celebrate the plethora of new beginnings thanks to support from across the community. It is our partnership with our supporters that makes all this possible and I want to thank each and every one of you for supporting Jewish Blind & Disabled.

Wishing you all a healthy and happy new year.

Lisa Wimborne
Chief Executive

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Growing and developing

For over 55 years, we’ve proudly supported Jewish individuals with physical disabilities or vision impairments. Today, we face the greatest challenge in our history. When our founder, Cecil Rosen, established this charity, he could never have foreseen the scale of need we now experience.

We are facing unprecedented demand for our housing and support services. We want to help every Jewish person who needs us, but we are all too aware that we are not able to meet the current demand. This is our greatest challenge to date, but we are determined to grow and develop to ensure that we change this.

Work continues apace on our 30 new accessible apartments at Ephraim Court in the heart of Mill Hill East’s thriving Jewish community. Just two miles away in East Finchley stands our oldest development, Fairacres. In January 2025, we secured planning permission to redevelop the building – an ambitious project that will enlarge all flats to meet wheelchair accessibility standards, add 11 new apartments, and transform Fairacres into a modern, sustainable, fully accessible home (more details about this on pages 10 and 11).

Alongside housing, we’ve expanded our community-based services, offering support and advice to people living in their own homes through our Independent Living Advisory Service, Sight Loss Support Groups, and JEMS (support group for those impacted by multiple sclerosis).

WE’VE EXPANDED OUR COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES, OFFERING SUPPORT AND ADVICE TO PEOPLE LIVING IN THEIR OWN HOMES THROUGH OUR INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISORY SERVICE, SIGHT LOSS SUPPORT GROUPS, AND JEMS (SUPPORT GROUP FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS).

We have a huge challenge ahead; one we are determined to meet. We know we can’t do this alone, and we are so grateful to our generous supporters, volunteers and our wonderful, dedicated staff team. Working together we can transform lives.



350

shopping minibus trips were made to local supermarkets and kosher shops enabling tenants who struggle with public transport to do their own shopping, retaining their independence, and in turn enabling them to cook for themselves



360

tenants lived in one of our 7 JBD developments where we provided them with an accessible home and peace of mind with 24/7 onsite support



250k+

individual phone calls were made by our house managers to tenants. Our twice-daily checks provide tenants and their families with peace of mind



208

people living in their own home in the wider community were given advice and support, to enable them to remain safely in their own home, through our Independent Living Advisory Service (ILA)



20

days is the average time from an application for our ILA service to an occupational therapy visit. The wait for a local authority service is over a year

Satisfaction rates to be proud of

We work hard to ensure that we provide the very best housing and support services we can offer. We strive to deliver person-centred services that meet the needs of each and every one of the people we support. In the last year, we have sought feedback from our beneficiaries to ensure that we are doing just that, and the results have proved that the hard work of our dedicated team is a reason for us to be proud of all we have achieved.

100% of the people we have supported through our Independent Living Advisory Service told us that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the service we provided them. 100% also reported that the recommendations provided to them are helping them maintain independence at home and 92% have successfully secured the adaptations they need thanks to our service. We would of course like this figure to be 100% and will continue to support and advocate for those who are struggling to secure these adaptations from local authorities or other statutory services.

Our 2024 tenants survey was equally impressive; 97% of tenants said that living with JBD made them feel safe and secure and 96% said they were either very satisfied or satisfied with the JBD house management service, with the remaining 4% saying they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

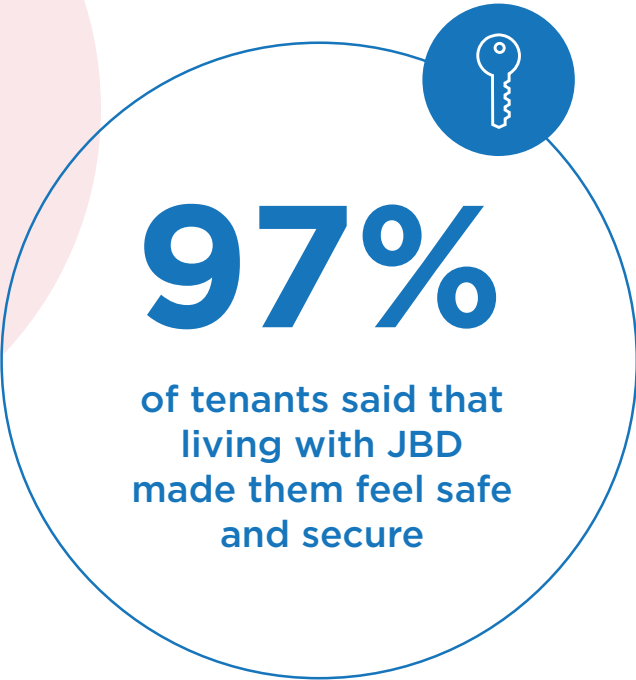
89.5% of our tenants were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of repairs carried out in their flat – and when that repair was carried out by our in-house maintenance team, the satisfaction level rose to 95.5%. This compares very favourably to the 74.5% of social housing tenants who were satisfied with the repairs service they received.

Over this past year we have continued to grow our community-based service offering, both supporting more people through our Independent Living Advisory Service and launching new support groups for Jewish people living with sight loss. In a short space of time these services are proving invaluable to those who are accessing them.

The hard work of our 59-strong workforce was recognised this year when we were awarded Charity Employer of the Year in the annual Work Avenue Awards. Judges praised our high staff retention and staff satisfaction with 98% of our staff saying they were proud to work for JBD.

WE HAVE A LOT TO BE PROUD OF, AND WE SHOULD BE CELEBRATING THIS. WE KNOW THAT OUR SERVICES TRANSFORM LIVES. WE WON'T REST ON OUR LAURELS AND SIT BACK AND CELEBRATE UNTIL WE CAN MEET THE NEEDS OF EVERY SINGLE PERSON WHO TURNS TO US FOR SUPPORT.

LISA WIMBORNE



Jo and Chris' Story

From living with her parents in her 20s, to moving back to JBD's Frances and Dick James Court (FDJ) in 2025 with her husband Chris, FDJ has been the backdrop for some of Jo's most defining moments. Jo shares their story in her own words.



CHANGE HAD ALWAYS SCARED ME, AND THERE WAS SO MUCH UPHEAVAL GOING ON IN OUR LIVES. WE WERE SURROUNDED BY HOSPITAL APPOINTMENTS AND VISITS.

"I remember that moment over 19 years ago when my mum told me we would be moving to a flat at a Jewish Blind & Disabled building. As a 25-year-old, I was totally against it. Change had always scared me, and there was so much upheaval going on in our lives. We were surrounded by hospital appointments and visits. Between the four of us in my family, health was questionable - but at that point, my health was the main concern. I became very unwell. The deterioration in my health led to multiple surgeries and complications, including issues with my thyroid, gallbladder, several endometrial surgeries, a tonsillectomy, a brain bleed, and a pulmonary embolism.

We made the move as a family in 2006. I remember the support my brother, Michael, and I received from the community in the building. That was my first impression. Both Michael and I fell in love with the 'home from home' feeling. We felt safe and

cared for, even though we were young and unwell. There was no judgment - just love and understanding.

We learned to build our confidence and venture out into the world with the guidance and support of neighbours who became second family and staff at JBD. We learnt that disability is the ability to do tasks within your means and at your own pace. Everyone is individual and unique; no two people are the same. This encouraged my brother and I to try to be the best versions of ourselves and to give everything our best.

My brother introduced me to his best friend and my now husband, Chris, in 2006. That was his eternal gift to both Chris and me - a blessing for our happy ever after - before we sadly lost him. (BDE)

Chris and I began a wonderful chapter together 19 years ago at FDJ. Having my brother's blessing was the greatest gift of all. Our journey started here, and now fast forward to 2025, we are back in our own place creating our own home with my parents living in the same building.

Chris's health began to noticeably decline in 2010 - the same year he proposed to me in the beautiful setting of Corfu, Greece. It started with a gradual loss of sensation in his lower hands and legs, which eventually progressed to more severe symptoms and a significant loss of mobility. After many tests and investigations, Chris was finally diagnosed with a rare mitochondrial syndrome called SANDO.

Despite the challenges, we continue to live our best life together, side by side, embracing each day with love and resilience.

Living here, we have a real sense of security, and we know that the house managers are here should we need them. We can continue learning about ourselves, to practice self-love and self-care, and to remain part of the community, no matter what shape, size, or form our disability takes.

We are all equal and have the right to embrace every opportunity for happiness."



WE LEARNED TO BUILD OUR CONFIDENCE AND VENTURE OUT INTO THE WORLD WITH THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT OF NEIGHBOURS WHO BECAME SECOND FAMILY AND STAFF AT JBD.

The redevelopment of Fairacres

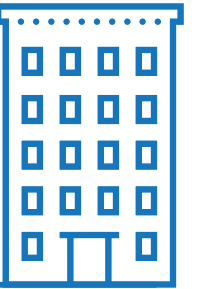
For nearly 40 years, Fairacres, in East Finchley, has provided affordable accommodation to adults of all ages living with physical disabilities or vision impairments.

The building is in high demand, with over 30 households on the waiting list. However, it needs significant modernisation to ensure it is fit for purpose for both current and future tenants. We have major plans to completely redevelop the site and deliver more much-needed accommodation for the local community.

Whilst the building is a popular choice, it still has its original roof, heating and water systems, unchanged since it was built. A minimum £3-4m expenditure is required to modernise and refurbish the 1980s building. Once we started to develop a list of essential upgrades, we began to question how tenable it would be to do these works with tenants in situ, whilst also researching the potential for extension on this site. With the entire roof needing replacing, it was logical to explore the viability of adding an additional storey onto the existing building.



We want and need this building to be part of our long-term portfolio. If we undertake only the general but significant repairs that are required, we are still left with a building that is inadequate by today's accessibility and environmental standards.



JBD strive to be the best in class, providing high-quality housing and support to our tenants. The current Fairacres building no longer allows us to meet this objective. Fairacres can accommodate additional units. Providing them on this existing site is the most cost-effective way JBD can deliver more homes for people in the community.

Earlier this year we secured planning permission from the London Borough of Barnet to extend and renovate this development. The proposed scheme will both extend the current 29 one-bedroom apartments to ensure they are all M4 (2) wheelchair-user dwellings and most importantly provide an additional 11 apartments, including 4 two-bedroom apartments for family units to provide a total of 40 apartments. Accessibility and sustainability have been central to the design of the proposed redevelopment.



We have a unique window of opportunity to move the current tenants from Fairacres into Ephraim Court, a new 30-apartment development currently under construction only two miles away from Fairacres, whilst we undertake the redevelopment of this building.

The total cost of the redevelopment is estimated at £14m. To date we have secured almost 60% of the funding required for this project. We can begin works on this scheme only once we have secured all the funding required to undertake this much-needed project. We are doing all we can to ensure that we will be able to commence the project once the building is vacant in early 2026.

To find out more about the Fairacres project or to discuss supporting this project please contact Lisa Wimborne, Chief Executive on 0204 548 8671 or lisa@jbd.org

Support for people with sight loss

In April 2024, we launched two monthly support groups for people living with sight loss, one in Finchley and the other in Borehamwood. Since then, they've grown into warm, welcoming spaces where people come together to share experiences, learn more about available support, and feel part of a community that understands their challenges.



Each session offers a safe, relaxed environment where people can meet others who are in similar situations, ask questions, and explore practical ways to live well with sight loss. We've been lucky to welcome a range of fantastic guest speakers already, from Rohit Jolly, Head of Ophthalmology at the Royal Free, to representatives from Friends of Moorfields, who gave an excellent overview of the ECLO (Eye Clinic Liaison Officer) service, and the lead from the RNIB Low Vision Clinic.

Following its visit, the RNIB Low Vision Clinic has kindly agreed to offer outreach support and will be delivering a clinic in one of our housing developments, bringing specialist advice and low vision assessments directly into the community.

The groups are shaped by the people who attend, and we're always keen to respond to suggestions. One great example of this came when attendees raised the need to improve understanding of sight loss within the wider community. As a result, we've delivered two successful Sight Loss Educational Sessions, aimed at synagogue representatives and members of the public who support people living with sight loss. These sessions have opened important conversations and increased local awareness.

Friends, family members and carers are always welcome to join the groups, and everyone is encouraged to take part in whatever way feels right for them, whether that's asking questions, listening in, or simply finding a sense of connection.

SIGHT LOSS EDUCATIONAL SESSION

After the success of our special educational session on living with sight loss, back in November 2024, we held a second session in June 2025.

We had a range of people with sight loss or vision impairments alongside community leaders and members, care coordinators and Rabbis from different synagogues across Hertfordshire and North London.

The session was facilitated by Gary Mazin, a dedicated advocate for accessibility and inclusion, and provided practical tools to help improve support for people with sight loss.



If you want to organise an educational session for your Synagogue or community group, or if you're living with sight loss or supporting someone who does, and want to join a support group, please contact Toni Lewis on **020 8371 6611** ext **620** or **toni@jbd.org**

News from around JBD

MATCH FUNDING CAMPAIGN SUCCESS

Our 36-hour Match Funding Campaign, 'Let's Get Giving for Independent Living', exceeded its target of £700,000, raising just under £800,000!

The appeal was vital to ensure that we can build more homes with 24/7 support and send more occupational therapists into people's own homes through our growing Independent Living Advisory Service, as well as expand our support group offering that connects people living with disabilities and sight loss to each other whilst offering them information and support.



Staff and tenants at Frances & Dick James Court

Chief Executive, Lisa Wimborne, said:

"Demand for all our services continues to grow each month. We currently have over 135 households on our housing waiting list. We want to provide them with a safe and accessible place to call home, however, we know that we can only achieve our ambitious plans for growth and development with generous support from the wider community. The amount raised during our match funding campaign is a fantastic achievement in 36 hours and this will go a long way in helping us meet our £1.9 million annual fundraising target."

Chair, Marc Gordon, said:

"This was a fantastic team effort, with tenants, supporters, volunteers, Trustees and staff working as one unit to raise much-needed funds for Jewish Blind & Disabled. Donors responded with generosity. A huge thank you to the over 1,750 members of our community who supported the campaign enabling us to transform more lives. We really are a special community, one that cares about supporting each other and this campaign has reinforced that for all of us at JBD."

Thank you to our 1,750 donors, 80 ambassadors and 1 match funder.



Livi & Woolf running for JBD at the Maccabi Fun Run with their parents Anthony and Susannah.

MACCABI FUN RUN

This year, we had 18 people, run, walk or scoot for us at the Maccabi GB Community Fun Run.

Thank you to everyone who took part for Jewish Blind & Disabled and for raising just under £3,000. Thank you also to Swizzels for sponsoring our charity stall.

ANNUAL 'FRIENDS OF JBD' GOLF DAY

Over 100 people joined us for our annual Golf Day at Hartsbourne Golf Club.

Huge thanks to Lloyd Botchin for his continued support in organising the event and to our Golf Committee. This year the event raised a record-breaking £45,000.



Lloyd Botchin with Jonathan Castle – winner of the Straightest Drive trophy, and Lisa Wimborne

OUR MINIBUS GETS A BOOST FROM THE NATIONAL LOTTERY

We're thrilled to share that we have been awarded £19,050 from The National Lottery Community Fund to help with the running costs of our North West London Shopping Minibus. This is the third time we have received funding from The National Lottery.

Thank you to The National Lottery Community Fund, your support will ensure our tenants can shop for themselves and in turn then cook for themselves, retaining their much-prized independence.



Volunteer spotlight

We rely on our incredible volunteers – over 70 of them (including our Trustees) – who take on a range of roles from befriending tenants to leading activities like art, exercise, and discussion groups. Our volunteers help make JBD a vibrant, warm community and we're hugely grateful to each of them.

SIMON & TRACY DAVIS

Simon began volunteering with JBD at the start of the pandemic, offering weekly befriending calls to isolated tenants.

We initially matched Simon with three tenants based on their shared interests and Simon called them every week without fail. Once Covid restrictions lifted and life returned to normal, Simon continued to volunteer with us and now visits a tenant at Hilary Dennis Court once a week. He has recently been joined by his wife Tracy who also visits a tenant in the same building.



Simon said: "Volunteering reminds me how much we can learn just by taking the time to listen."

Tracy added: "I have recently started volunteering for JBD and was asked to befriend a tenant called Sadie. It has been wonderful getting to know Sadie and we have had many lovely chats. It is also great to meet other tenants at Hilary Dennis Court."

EMPOWERING TENANTS WITH DIGITAL SKILLS



As part of our ongoing commitment to promoting digital inclusion, we recently partnered with a group of young Jewish professionals – including members of Jewglers at Google and Jewish Employee Resource Groups – to offer one-on-one IT support sessions. Tenants received hands-on help with smartphones, tablets, and laptops and they helped to improve their confidence or address specific issues.



There was glowing feedback from tenants with one commenting: "My IT specialist was friendly and professional. He helped me with several problems and even gave me his phone number in case I need more support."

CELEBRATING NATIONAL VOLUNTEERS WEEK

In June, we marked National Volunteers Week with a special thank you dinner to celebrate our dedicated volunteers.



We were also proud to be joined by tenant volunteers who help deliver powerful workshops to primary and secondary schools, raising awareness about living with a physical disability or vision impairment.

A special thank you goes to our dedicated team of Trustees, whose support, expertise, and guidance continue to strengthen our work and impact.

Our Chief Executive, Lisa Wimborne, along with the Community Engagement Team, thanked our volunteers for the time, energy, and support they give to us. Their contributions span a wide range of roles – from befriending and leading activities within our developments, to driving tenants on ad hoc outings in the JBD minibus, organising social events, and supporting our vital fundraising efforts.

Simone Mazin, Community Engagement Manager, said:

"National Volunteers Week is the perfect time to recognise our volunteers' dedication, passion, and hard work. Our volunteers all play a crucial role in helping to create the wonderful community at JBD for which we are extremely grateful"

We couldn't do what we do without the incredible support from volunteers. If you, or anyone you know, is interested in volunteering with us, please email volunteer@jbd.org

Developing vibrant Jewish communities

We are committed to incorporating Jewish values within our developments and celebrate Shabbat and the Chaggim throughout the year. We work closely with local synagogues and community groups to provide a warm atmosphere and a unique Jewish community.

We are incredibly grateful for the relationships we have built with community partners. These connections are especially important for tenants who may find it difficult to attend synagogue regularly, helping to cultivate a supportive, inclusive and non-denominational environment.

Thanks to our relationships with local synagogue communities, we offer a wide and diverse Jewish offering across all buildings throughout the year including:

- Regular Friday night services throughout the year, followed by Friday night kiddush and communal Shabbat dinners
- Megillah readings on Purim
- Pesach prayers and activities
- Cheesecake and learning sessions on Shavuot
- Shofar blowing during Rosh Hashanah
- Yizkor memorial prayers on Yom Kippur
- Decorating succahs and assisting tenants in fulfilling the mitzvah of Arba Minim on Succot
- Communal Chanukah candle lighting
- Challah bakes events throughout the year

SPECIAL THANKS TO

Rabbi Jack and the Mill Hill East Jewish Community

Rabbi Dov Schochet and Mrs Jessica Schochet from Chabad Mill Hill East

Rabbi Zvi Cohen and the community from Kingsbury Synagogue

Rabbi Feldman and the members of the Bushey United Synagogue Ladies Guild

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg and members of the New North London Synagogue

Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg and members of Woodford Forest Synagogue

Rabbi Rafi Goodwin from Chigwell & Hainault Synagogue

Rabbi Yitzchok Austin from Leytonstone and Wanstead Synagogue



Thanks to all the synagogues who support JBD through their appeals or inviting us to speak. For more information on this, please contact Talia Supran on 020 8371 6611 ext. 610 or talia@jbd.org

Lifetime Achievement Award

We are proud to announce that our joint President, Malcolm Ozin OBE, has been awarded the prestigious Lifetime Achievement Award at the London Borough of Barnet Civic Awards 2025

This honour recognises Malcolm's extraordinary commitment to Jewish Blind & Disabled and the community over more than 55 years.

The Civic Awards ceremony took place in April at the Council Chamber at Hendon Town Hall. The event celebrates individuals and groups whose dedication and service have made a lasting impact across the borough. As The Worshipful the Mayor of the London Borough of Barnet, Councillor Tony Vourou, noted, the awards are "a beacon of recognition, shining a light on the extraordinary efforts of those who strive to make the London Borough of Barnet a better place."

Malcolm's journey with Jewish Blind & Disabled began in its earliest days, and his leadership has been instrumental in shaping the organisation into the vital lifeline it is today. His unwavering dedication has helped JBD to grow in both scale and reach, ensuring that tenants can live independently with dignity, security and choice.

Speaking of the award, JBD Chief Executive Lisa Wimborne said, "Malcolm Ozin's vision, perseverance, and deep sense of community responsibility has been the foundation on which JBD was built. His legacy is seen not only in our buildings but in the lives of every individual who has benefited from our work."



We are absolutely delighted that his immense contribution has been recognised with this well-deserved Lifetime Achievement Award."

We extend our warmest congratulations to Malcolm on this honour, and our heartfelt thanks for a lifetime of service that continues to inspire all of us involved with Jewish Blind & Disabled.

Fundraising update

LASTING GIFTS

Leaving a gift in your Will to Jewish Blind & Disabled is one of the many ways you can support people in our community with physical disabilities or vision impairments long into the future.

However big or small, gifts in Wills are a lifeline to JBD. In June 2025, Jewish Blind & Disabled received a bequest of £20,000 from a gentleman called Jack who had supported the charity for 35 years. Although Jack did not have physical disabilities until his later years, he was very empathetic with the cause and wanted to do something to help.

We are extremely grateful for this legacy which will help us support more people who need our services.



CELEBRATIONS

To mark your celebration, why not ask friends and family to donate to Jewish Blind & Disabled as an alternative to receiving a gift?

When you let us know about your simcha we can send you a small flyer about JBD to send with your invitation and we will also send you a certificate with the total amount raised by your friends and family, and a list of donor names.

In the last year, thanks to the generosity of simcha-celebrating supporters, we were able to raise over £12,000.



2026 JBD DIARY

The 2026 Jewish Blind & Disabled desk diary is in production and will be available from November. You can purchase a diary for a suggested donation of £65.

To notify us of an upcoming simcha or to order a 2026 JBD diary, please contact **Tami Tobi** on tami@jbd.org or **020 4548 8677**.

